



No Wrong Door New Jersey Strategic Plan 2010

Women's Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of
Women with Disabilities Grant

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The *No Wrong Door New Jersey (NWDNJ)* collaboration is committed to addressing the intersection of violence and the lives of women with intellectual and developmental disabilities and women with mental illness. The *NWDNJ* collaboration partners have been working together for a number of years to improve the services provided to this historically silenced population. The following document outlines the collaboration's history, needs assessment findings and strategic plan. Past efforts and plans for the future are grounded in the *No Wrong Door New Jersey* project vision: **“We envision that survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities will be treated with dignity and respect through a seamless integrated system where they will receive timely, appropriate and sufficient services regardless of the door they enter”**.

I. Overview of Collaboration

The *NWDNJ* collaboration consists of four statewide advocacy agencies dedicated to improving the quality of services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence and women with intellectual and developmental disabilities and women with mental illness. Fear and stigma leave women within the selected disability populations with little voice and power. Through collective efforts the collaboration partners hope to end the silence of these women and create sustainable systems change. The collaboration includes:

- The Arc of New Jersey (The Arc of NJ) - Established in 1949, The Arc of New Jersey is a civil and human rights advocacy organization committed to community inclusion for all individuals with intellectual and related developmental disabilities. Community-based services are available statewide through a strong network of local county chapters.
- The Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ) – A nonprofit agency that strives for mental health for children and adults through advocacy, education, training, and services.
- New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NJCASA) – A nonprofit agency whose mission is to promote the compassionate and just treatment of survivors, their loved ones and significant others, foster collaborative relationships between community systems, and affect attitudinal and behavioral changes in society as we work toward the elimination of sexual violence against all people.

- New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women (NJCBW) - A statewide association that provides leadership, support and resources on the prevention of violence against women in New Jersey through advocacy, training, public awareness and research.

No Wrong Door NJ received an Education, Training and Enhanced Services to End Violence Against and Abuse of Women with Disabilities grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) in 2007. The grant purpose focuses on creating systems change within disability and victim services agencies. This generous award has funded the collaboration's planning work to effectively create systems change in New Jersey during the past two years. The collaboration partners entered an extensive process to strengthen the relationships of organizations within the collaboration, determine pilot site locations and identify the gaps in service provision within disability and victim service agencies.

** The terms "collaboration partners", "project team," and "the team" are used interchangeably in this plan. These terms reference the NWDNJ collaboration partners in their various roles and activities throughout the strategic plan and implementation phase. Additionally, the terms "pilot partners", "pilot sites" and "local collaborations" are used interchangeably in this plan to reference the agencies in the Atlantic and Morris pilot site counties.

A. Collaboration Charter

The OVW grant allowed *NWDNJ* a significant amount of time to strengthen the collaboration. As part of a process to develop a formalized collaboration charter, the partners explored shared values, strengths and areas of opportunity. Common language and a set of communication guidelines were developed as well as agreements regarding roles and responsibilities and the work process. The team formalized these discussions in a document referred to as the No Wrong Door New Jersey Collaboration Charter. From this insightful process, a mission statement was cultivated to address the issue of violence in the lives of women with disabilities:

The mission of No Wrong Door NJ is to build the capacity of domestic and sexual violence organizations, intellectual and developmental disability organizations and mental health organizations, to provide an integrated continuum of services to survivors with disabilities. The collaboration will do so by:

- *Fostering collaborative partnerships*
- *Developing and promoting promising practices and policies for service provision*

- *Encouraging the participation of survivors with disabilities in the development, delivery and evaluation of the initiative*
- *Encouraging accountability and responsibility as an integral part of the continuum of services*
- *Supporting continuous quality improvement*

Upon OVW approval of the collaboration charter in June 2008, the *NWDNJ* team began a process of narrowing the project's focus.

B. Narrowing the focus

New Jersey is a densely populated state with 21 counties. To effectively implement systems change, the collaboration decided to recruit disability agencies and victim service agencies in two counties to act as pilot sites for the project. An extensive set of criteria was developed to assess the capacity and willingness of affiliates of The Arc of NJ and the MHANJ and the members of NJCBW and NJCASA. After performing an extensive assessment, the collaboration determined that organizations in Atlantic and Morris Counties met the criteria. The selection process was documented in the *No Wrong Door NJ Narrowing the Focus Memo*.

The following agencies were recruited and agreed to participate in the project:

- The Atlantic County Women's Center (ACWC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering and supporting women, children and families. Services include a 24 hour hotline, counseling, emergency shelter services, legal assistance, children's services, batterer's intervention and a sexual assault response team. It is a member program of both NJCBW and NJCASA, providing both domestic and sexual violence services. The ACWC is unique to this project as they are the only dual agency among the pilot partners. The agency suffered a significant budget cut during the planning phase of the grant and continues to deal with the challenges of changes in staff roles and responsibilities.
- The Arc of Atlantic County (The Arc of AC) is a non-profit organization that makes a difference in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families through a variety of services including but not limited to housing, advocacy and support services. It is a chapter of The Arc of NJ. The Arc of AC is the largest of the pilot partners, employing over 200 staff.

- The Mental Health Association in Atlantic County (MHA in AC) is an organization dedicated to improving the mental health of people in New Jersey and to achieving victory over all types of mental illness through advocacy, education and support services. It is an affiliate of MHA in NJ and the smallest of the pilot partners in Atlantic County.
- Jersey Battered Women's Service (JBWS), Inc. is a non-profit organization providing domestic violence and abuse prevention services in Morris County. Services include a 24-hour hotline, counseling, emergency shelter and transitional living services, legal assistance, children's services, batterer's intervention and a teen dating abuse prevention program. It is a member of NJCBW. JBWS is the project's largest Morris County pilot partner, employing over 75 staff.
- The Morris County Sexual Assault Center (MCSAC) is a non-profit organization providing support and advocacy to survivors and their families in the area of sexual assault and abuse. It is a member of NJCASA. The agency suffered a significant budget cut during the planning phase of the grant and continues to deal with the challenges of changes in staff roles and responsibilities. Additionally, they experienced a leadership change immediately after the needs assessment process yet they remain committed to the *NWDNJ* project.
- The Mental Health Association of Morris County (MHA of MC) is a non-profit organization that provides a wide variety of support, education and advocacy services for adults, children and families impacted by mental illness. It is an affiliate of the MHA in NJ. Despite a leadership change during the planning phase of this grant, MHA of MC remains committed to the *NWDNJ* project.

II. Needs Assessment Plan, Implementation and Report

A. Planning

Upon completion and OVW approval of the Focus Memo, the collaboration constructed a plan to gather critical data about the gaps in services at the domestic and sexual violence and disability organizations in Atlantic and Morris Counties. Existing national data was limited and information regarding service provision to the selected populations within New Jersey was unavailable. The team created a set of guiding questions to provide a framework for the needs assessment plan. It was expected that the collected data would answer the following global questions:

1. What are the hopes and expectations of consumers with intellectual and developmental disabilities and consumers with mental illness service system(s)? What are the hopes and expectations of survivors of domestic and sexual violence service systems? How do those expectations align with services?
2. What are the experiences of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and people with mental illness when utilizing services? What are the experiences of survivors of domestic and sexual violence when utilizing services?
3. What are existing relationships between organizations providing direct services? What barriers exist that make it difficult for relationship building between organizations?
4. What is the status of the current service system between disability organizations and providers of domestic and sexual violence programs in Atlantic and Morris Counties? What are the opportunities for change within these systems? What barriers are present that prevents that change?

Once these questions were established, the project partners engaged in conversations regarding details of the needs assessment plan.

Safety and accessibility factors were the foremost driving factors in regard to the data collection process. The completed needs assessment plan included the goals, purpose, proposed audiences, recruitment process, confidentiality plan, consent process, incentives, work plan and tools. The needs assessment was designed to

capture the experiences of those designing, budgeting for, overseeing and providing services as well as those individuals who utilize services. Based on the wide range of audiences and many discussions regarding which method would be most effective for data collection, the collaboration agreed to use a combination of focus groups, individual interviews and a survey to collect data in both pilot counties.

Proposed audiences for focus groups included staff, consumers with disabilities, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, volunteers of the sexual assault programs, mental health consumers-at-large and self advocates. These two-hour focus groups were conducted by a floater, facilitator and note taker and held in locations accessible by public transportation. Individual interviews were scheduled with a representative from each pilot agency's Board of Directors, Executive Directors, Program Directors, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) and caregivers of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The *No Wrong Door NJ Needs Assessment Plan* was submitted to the Office on Violence Against Women and received approval in May 2009.

B. Implementation

In June of 2009, the *NWDNJ* project began implementing the needs assessment plan. To collect the necessary data, core members of the statewide collaboration team were assigned to conduct face-to-face and telephone interviews. Additional staff from the statewide partner agencies were recruited and trained to act as facilitators and floaters at the focus groups. Focus groups were held at all of the pilot partner agencies. They were scheduled at varying times to meet the needs of participants. Target gift cards were issued to consumers, survivors, self-advocates and mental health consumers-at-large upon their arrival for their participation in the focus groups.

All of the interviews and focus groups were conducted over a 35-day period. Data collected from the focus groups and interviews was recorded manually and typed as soon as possible after the interaction. The post focus group discussions between facilitators, floaters and note takers were tape recorded. During the tape recording sessions, the staff conducting the focus groups avoided discussing any factors that could reveal any personally identifying information about the participants. All data collected was given to the Project Coordinator and kept in a locked drawer in her office.

C. Report

The *NWDNJ* collaboration was able to complete the majority of the proposed interviews and focus groups and is grateful to all those that participated. Budget cuts to a few of the pilot partner agencies created a barrier to completing as many program director interviews and staff focus groups as proposed. Due to communication and protocol barriers, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) were the only proposed audience that the collaboration was unable to gather data from.

The final numbers for participation in both Atlantic and Morris Counties are as follows:

Focus Groups

Audience	Number of Focus Groups	Number of Participants
Staff	7	49
Consumers	4	24
Consumers-at-Large	3	19
Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence	5	43

Interviews

Audience	Number of Interviews
Board of Directors	5
Executive Directors	7
Program Directors	24
Staff	1
Sexual Assault Volunteer	5
Caregivers	3
Self-Advocates	5
Consumers	1
Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence	2
SANES	0

Atlantic County Total participants = 95

Morris County Total participants = 93

Total Participants = 188

Upon completion of the data collection, data was analyzed by the *NWDNJ* Project Coordinator, the Project Director and NJCBW's Technical Assistance Coordinator. The needs assessment was not a professional research project and no scientific method was used to analyze the data. Findings were based on themes that were seen consistently throughout audiences and counties. The themes were shared with the statewide collaboration for further feedback and discussion. The findings were documented in a 65 page Needs Assessment Report which included the audiences who spoke to each finding and more detailed information regarding service providers and users' experiences in Atlantic and Morris Counties. The *No Wrong Door NJ* Needs Assessment Report was submitted and approved by OVW in December 2009.

Data revealed the following findings:

- Inconsistencies in policies and procedures
 - Around the intersection of violence and people with disabilities
 - To communicate new and revised policies and procedures to current and new staff as well as consumers/survivors
 - For consumer intake across staff and agencies
 - Knowledge and viable process for consumer rights, safety and confidentiality
- Weak inter-agency collaborations
 - Informal or nonexistent community relationships among pilot site partners
 - Lack of cross-training and understanding of the issues of violence in the lives of survivors and women with disabilities
- Ineffective referral systems
 - Provided on a very limited basis or not at all
 - Supplied without proper follow-up
 - Supplied with limited regard to individual needs
- Inadequate accessibility for consumers and survivors
 - Attitudinal barriers to meeting the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and people with mental illness
 - Inequity in the manner that accommodations are provided
- Insufficient attention to confidentiality
 - Lack areas to accommodate intake privacy and confidentiality

- Scarce community based resources
 - Lack of shared resources in the community
 - Inadequate eligibility and approval process
 - Personnel shortages
- Inconsistency in perceptions between service providers and consumers/survivors
 - Insufficient program guidelines
 - Lack of consumer involvement in developing guidelines
- Lack of budget planning to address selected population
 - Budget lacks specific allocations for selected population
- Insufficient safety measures (Morris County specific)

These findings became the basis for the *No Wrong Door New Jersey* Strategic Plan.

III. Collaboration Structure and Work Process

In recognition of the change in the types of work to be accomplished during the implementation phase of the grant, the collaboration agreed to develop workgroups to specifically address each initiative. The collaboration team believes that the workgroups will clarify roles and responsibilities; enhance productivity and effectiveness for completing tasks; and maintain structure and accountability to the statewide team during the transition to the Implementation Phase. Most workgroups will consist of at least one member from each of the statewide partners to ensure appropriate agency representation and consumer and survivor voice. Workgroups include a Technical Assistance Team, an Accessibility Review Team, a Responsiveness Review Team, a Training Team and a Resource Development Team. All statewide team members will participate in at least two workgroups. The Chair for each workgroup will be responsible for coordinating tasks based on a timeline specific for that workgroup and maintain a schedule for meetings. The Chair is also responsible for reporting the progress of the work to the statewide team.

The statewide collaboration will meet a minimum of two hours once per month. Meetings will be primarily face-to-face at the Arc of New Jersey and via phone if necessary. Most meetings will be scheduled for a maximum of five hours. The logistics for these meetings will be coordinated by the Project Director. The team members will commit to attend regularly scheduled meetings, as described. A calendar for 2010 scheduled meetings will be posted on Base Camp. Team members had previously agreed to rotate responsibilities of facilitator and note taker; that practice will continue.

During the Implementation Phase, the Project Director will continue to act as the primary point of contact for the media, work closely with the fiscal intermediary (Executive Director of NJCBW) to monitor the budget and be the main point of contact with OVW. Additionally, the Project Director will coordinate activities of the statewide team and Chairs.

The Project Coordinator will assist the Project Director on issues related to the overall function of the collaboration. However, once the strategic plan is approved, statewide workgroups will be responsible for deliverables outlined in the work plan to be delivered to OVW. The Project Director and Chairs of workgroups are collectively responsible for assisting workgroups to maintain timelines and meet deadlines. The Project Director will become the primary contact for the statewide team and report on the overall activities and progress of the entire project consistent with the responsibility of the chair of the statewide team. The Vera Institute of Justice will continue to provide technical assistance to the team. The Chair of the statewide team will coordinate monthly TA sessions with Vera via telephone during the monthly statewide meeting. Chairs of all workgroups will have an opportunity to discuss needs at that time. The statewide Chair will coordinate contact with Vera in advance of the monthly meeting, if TA is required. *No Wrong Door NJ* expects that established clear roles and responsibilities will contribute to successful implementation of the strategic plan.

IV. Strategic Plan

Upon approval of the Needs Assessment Report, the statewide collaboration began discussions around developing a strategic plan to address some of the needs assessment findings. The statewide team participated in a two-day strategic planning retreat, facilitated by staff from the Vera Institute of Justice, to discuss and prioritize possible initiatives. The process of choosing initiatives was guided by a number of principles. These principals are based on the collaboration's shared values as outlined in the Collaboration Charter.

Guiding principals include:

- Ensuring that all activities have meaningful engagement and inclusion of consumers and survivors.
- Short term initiatives should be feasible, given the time constraints and the resources available during the implementation phase of the grant.
- Initiatives should be prioritized based on what the collaboration believes are foundational activities to create sustainable systems change.

The collaboration continues to emphasize the principal of social justice throughout its work; all persons have an equal right to receive fair and timely services from service providers. Using these principals and the needs assessment findings as a framework, the *NWDNJ* project has selected four short-term initiatives.

During the strategic planning retreat, the team had a number of discussions regarding the current structure of the collaboration and how the initiatives chosen would be executed. In meetings immediately following the retreat, a number of decisions were made in regard to altering the current collaboration structure and regarding the structure to provide technical assistance to the pilot sites. The structure of the current statewide collaboration worked successfully during the planning phase of this grant. However, the activities planned for implementation require more intensive attention from the statewide members and will often occur concurrently. In order to accomplish the proposed initiatives, the statewide collaboration has revised its current structure. Work groups have been created with designated chairpersons to lead each team to perform specific tasks. (See section III of this plan for more detail on the structure of the collaboration.)

It will be imperative that the statewide partners have an effective plan to provide technical assistance. For consistency purposes, a statewide team member will be assigned to each pilot site county. These two point people will act as a team (referred to as the statewide technical assistance (TA) team), working in conjunction to identify and meet the needs of the pilot sites. Additional resources from the statewide partner agencies will be utilized as the need arises for certain expertise.

The following section of the plan will detail each initiative and the activities involved. For further clarity, the initiatives have been separated by specific statewide goals and goals that involve both the statewide collaboration and the pilot sites.

Statewide Collaboration Initiative:

Initiative 1: Expand statewide team's capacity to provide technical assistance.

Initiatives Involving the Pilot Sites include:

Initiative 1: Foster collaboration among the pilot site agencies.

Initiative 2: Enhance access and safety at the local level.

Initiative 3: Develop policies and procedures that are accessible and responsive to survivors with disabilities.

The following section will provide: 1) further detail on each initiative; 2) documentation on the rational for each initiative; 3) the activities involved; 4) roles and responsibility for carrying out the activities; 5) and a projected timeline.

A detailed work plan (see attached Appendix A) outlines the specific tasks for the implementation phase.

Statewide Initiative



Initiative 1: Expand statewide team's capacity to provide technical assistance on the issue of violence and women with disabilities.

One of the main services that the statewide partners currently provide is technical assistance to their members and affiliates. The collaboration, however, recognizes that the intersection of violence and women with disabilities is one that requires more extensive training and knowledge.

Although the pilot partners have a good working knowledge and resources, the statewide collaboration expects them to gain additional tools during the implementation of the strategic plan, as well as encounter challenges with creating systems change. The statewide team is vested in providing continual support to pilot partners in order to maintain seamless, timely and sufficient service provisions to the selected populations and sustain long-term systems change.

NWDNJ acknowledges that it would be challenging for a single agency to have sole expertise in the focus areas of domestic and sexual violence as well as mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities. To provide effective services to survivors with disabilities, the victim service agencies and the disability agencies must develop a process of working together. The statewide partners have been working together for a number of years to address this issue yet concede that there are a number of ways the collaboration could strengthen its relationships and work more proactively on a number of levels. In order to continue to provide an example of a strong, proactive collaboration, there are a number of activities the partners will engage in to increase our capacities.

Activity 1: Enhance internal capacity around the issue of domestic and sexual violence in the lives of women with disabilities.

The key purpose of the grant is to create sustainable systems change. To realize sustainable systems change at the local level, continual support to the pilot sites from the statewide team, beyond the grant period, is required. The statewide technical assistance team, with input from additional statewide team members, will develop a plan for providing long term technical assistance to the pilot site agencies.

The Collaboration agrees with the need to *be the change that we want to see*. **While we accept that we are not there yet, we must believe** that the collaboration will continue to reach for that goal. Therefore, during the Implementation Phase of the project the collaboration will perform a number of activities that will strengthen its capacity to provide long term technical assistance. The statewide team will continue to meet on a monthly basis. The meetings will be used to share information and knowledge gained from interactions with the pilot sites and working groups. This process will create an opportunity for the statewide team to gain more insight on issues

that may emerge, document valuable information and offer feedback. Lessons learned during this process will be recorded and used for a toolkit along with best practices that emerge during the Implementation Phase and from the Planning Phase. These lessons learned will contribute not only to the technical assistance of the collaboration, and the pilot sites, but they will also enhance the TA being provided to statewide affiliates and chapters.

During the Spring and early Summer of 2010, the project plans to perform accessibility and responsiveness reviews at the pilot site level. The accessibility review tool will be performed at NJCBW and NJCASA also as a way to test the effectiveness of the tool. The results from the reviews will be one way that the statewide partners benefit from ongoing learning from the pilot sites. It is the hope of the collaboration that learning from these reviews, as well as learning from the pilot sites and working group activities will increase the collaboration's working knowledge of how to best provide services to victims and survivors with disabilities. Finally, a No Wrong Door NJ Toolkit (see page 16 for more detail regarding the toolkit) will be developed with the collected best practices and lessons learned from the project that will be shared with a broader audience statewide as a long term tool for technical assistance. Information related to challenges around collaboration, capacity building and systems change will be gathered during the implementation. Throughout the implementation, the TA team will be evaluating the technical assistance to the pilots to gauge effectiveness. A long-term technical assistance plan will be developed in August and September of 2010 based on lessons learned from providing technical assistance to the pilot sites during the implementation phase.

Activity 2: Develop a train-the-trainer curriculum around the intersection of violence and women with disabilities.

During the needs assessment, the collaboration heard from various stakeholders that cross-training between victim services and disability organizations was a much needed resource. To address this need, the *No Wrong Door NJ* collaboration will designate a Training Team to develop a curriculum to specifically address domestic and sexual violence in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and people with mental illness. The team assigned to this task will review national best practice curriculums and adapt them to address the specific issues of *NWDNJ's* target populations. The expectation is that the curriculum will provide a basis for victim services and disability organizations to develop a continuous system for cross-training. The training team will design and develop a curriculum between May and September of 2010 in hopes that there will be time to share it with the pilot partners before the end of the grant cycle.

NWDNJ recognizes that a best practice curriculum does not contribute to long-lasting systems change if it is only one time training. In order to make the best use of this training, the statewide partners will incorporate it into their annual conferences as part of the variety of workshops offered. NJCBW and NJCASA will incorporate the curriculum into their training institutes with year round trainings offered to a wide range

of community stakeholders. As part of the sustainability plan (Activity 4), the collaboration will continue to have discussions to explore additional ways to institutionalize the curriculum into our future work.

Activity 3: Develop a toolkit that will improve services for survivors with disabilities.

The *NWDNJ* collaboration believes that sufficient resources are an essential part of improving services for survivors with disabilities. The needs assessment performed on Atlantic and Morris Counties reflected the barriers that victim services and disability agencies face due in part to a lack of available resources. To address this challenge, members of the statewide collaboration will be assigned to a Resource Development Team. Using best practice models, this team will create a toolkit that can be utilized by service providers to encourage more timely and appropriate services. The toolkit will include lessons learned and best practices collected by the statewide collaboration. It is expected that the toolkit will not only enhance the capacity of the pilot partners but will additionally be useful to victim services and disability agencies throughout New Jersey. The Resource Development Team will design, develop and produce the tool kit beginning in May 2010 to utilize some of the knowledge gained through working with the pilot sites. The finalized tool kit will be incorporated into the statewide team's many existing resources such as: agency websites, resource libraries and training institutes.

Activity 4: Develop a sustainability plan.

Sustaining a long-term commitment to address the intersection of violence and women with disabilities is one that the statewide partners feel strongly about. Funding will be the overarching challenge, but the partners will develop a sustainability plan that addresses both in-kind solutions and additional external funding sources.

The statewide meetings will be used to refine specifics of the plan. The plan will include ways to integrate the project's work into statewide conferences and training schedules and offer both to pilot sites on an ongoing basis. The partners are planning to draft an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will detail each partner's contribution to this long-term plan. Engaging other possible statewide partners such as the criminal justice system or other disability related agencies is another strong possibility. Ultimately, the collaboration's goal is to develop local collaborations modeled after the best practices learned from the current pilot sites in Atlantic and Morris counties.

Ideally, the *No Wrong Door NJ* Sustainability Plan will continue to be developed based on lessons learned and best practices to be shared with other statewide coalitions and with local programs that desire to replicate what was done in New Jersey. The statewide team will make this information more readily available with the development of a Toolkit.

Initiatives Involving the Pilot Sites



Initiative 1: Foster collaboration among the pilot site agencies.

The needs assessment conducted by the *NWDNJ* project revealed that there are areas to strengthen the collaborative relationships at the local level. The pilot site partners face challenges around time constraints and lack of adequate resources to devote the time and energy towards building relationships with the other pilot agencies. Authentic, proactive collaboration is foundational to creating sustainable systems change. Without collaborations that engage all levels of an organization, change will either not occur or be short lived. The statewide collaboration had developed a number of activities focused on fostering collaboration among the pilot site agencies. The pilot sites will be supported through the activities in this initiative by the statewide technical assistance (TA) team. Activities 1 and 2 act as the foundation for all of the future work of the pilot partners and are scheduled to occur February through March of 2010. Activities 3 and 4 build upon these activities and will occur after the pilot partners increase the trust and authenticity in their collective relationship.

Activity 1: Support local collaboration to develop own identity and work process.

The pilot partners are currently not meeting as a distinct group to address the intersection of violence and women with disabilities. The statewide technical assistance team will engage in activities with the local collaborations to assist them in developing a work process and identity. (See page 7 in the attached Appendix A for more detail on activities.) Creating a shared identity will act as a building block for the collaboration's other work together. Agreeing on a work process will create clear roles and responsibility and a greater level of accountability. Multiple meetings will be coordinated and facilitated by the TA team focused on cultivating the collaborative relationships. The process of engaging in these structured discussions will strengthen the relationships among pilot partners and increase the likelihood of the partners continuing to collaborate. The pilot partners will be able to provide enhanced services because they will have a work process in place that encourages proactive relationships versus reactive ones.

Activity 2: Enhance knowledge of services between collaboration partners.

One of the key activities to strengthen local agencies' relationships is to gain better understanding of the values held, programs offered and population served by the partner organizations. The pilot partners will increase their knowledge of one another's services available and populations served through a number of activities including agency tours, presentations and cross trainings for staff. To deepen their collective relationship, pilot partners will engage in discussions regarding shared barriers and their agencies' areas for opportunity. In an effort to inform others of their work together, the local collaborations will be supported by the statewide collaboration to make a public announcement of their relationship and commitment.

Activity 3: Local agency self-examination.

As the local collaboration partners strengthen their relationships and increase their knowledge about their partners, the NWDNJ team will lead them through a process of self examination. The needs assessment identified challenges that the pilot partners face around providing safe and accessible services to survivors with disabilities. Statewide review teams will create and perform accessibility and responsiveness audits to gauge the current levels at the pilot agencies. (See Initiative 2, page 15, for more detail regarding the audits). The pilot partners will commit to participating in these reviews and sharing the results with their collaborative partners.

Activity 4: Establish a sustainability plan.

The overarching goal of this OVW grant is to create sustainability through the creation of long lasting collaborative relationships and systems change. To gain consensus and understanding on how the local collaborations' efforts will continue, the pilot site partners will be asked to create a sustainability plan. The statewide team recommends that the sustainability plan include: details on future work process and meetings; a process for ensuring that the individual agencies are engaged in the collaboration; plans for future funding and growing the collaboration. The plan will also include action steps relating to barrier response plans (page 18) and policy revision (page 20) that may be incomplete at the end of the grant cycle. The pilot partners will formalize and document their sustainability plan in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The sustainability plan will occur after the reviews are completed. It is anticipated that long term goals will be related to the results from access and responsiveness reviews.



Initiative 2: Enhance access and safety at the local level.

The *No Wrong Door NJ* collaboration is committed to creating a seamless, integrated system of services for survivors with disabilities. As a project that believes in the incorporation of consumer and survivor voice throughout that system, data was gathered about consumer and survivor experience in the pilot partner agencies. The data revealed that there were gaps in the areas of accessibility and safety in these counties. Atlantic and Morris Counties were recruited as pilot sites based on their demonstrated commitment to addressing the needs of survivors with disabilities. The statewide collaboration recognizes this commitment and wants to support the pilot sites

in their efforts.

Upon creating a strategic plan for this project, the statewide team agreed that if the pilot partners were to develop a seamless system for survivors with disabilities, enhancing access and safety at a local level should be a priority. The statewide collaboration has designed a number of activities to address this issue. Activities in this initiative will be performed by two statewide work groups, an Accessibility Review Team and a Responsiveness Review Team, and the pilot partners.

Activity 1: Review/Evaluate/Create

The Review teams will begin meeting regularly upon OVW approval of the strategic plan. The chairs of each team will facilitate discussions around a vision for the reviews. National best practice accessibility and responsiveness reviews will be collected and evaluated for areas relevant to the *No Wrong Door NJ* project. The review teams will develop a set of universal questions to be included in both reviews. Building on the universal questions and drawing from best practice models, the review teams will create two reviews that are specific to accessibility and safety, respectively. The accessibility reviews will involve physical, attitudinal and programmatic accessibility. NJCBW and NJCASA have volunteered to have the accessibility audits performed at their respective agencies. Both of the victim service coalitions currently have existing goals to address related issues in the organizational strategic plans for their coalitions. The responsiveness/safety review will focus on creating safe and welcoming environments for survivors with disabilities. Since The Arc of NJ and MHANJ are both administrative offices and do not provide any direct services, a decision was made to perform the responsiveness reviews solely on the pilot sites to make better use of time and grant resources. The reviews will be designed with a solution focused perspective. The finalized products will be submitted to OVW for approval. Creating best practice reviews will be the main priority of the statewide team for the months of February, March and April 2010 to ensure that the following activities have sufficient time to implement.

Activity 2: Conduct reviews.

The statewide collaboration has a number of steps planned to ensure that the reviews are conducted in a consistent and timely manner. After receiving consent from the Executive Directors of the pilot sites to participate, the review teams will determine staff from the statewide and pilot teams to conduct the reviews.

Stakeholders' perspectives will be included as follows: the teams will consist of a statewide review team member, a point of contact from the agency being reviewed, a member of the pilot collaboration from another organization, and a consumer with a disability or a survivor member of the local collaboration (see page 12 of Appendix A). Accessibility reviews will be conducted at the victim services including: the Atlantic County Women's Center, Jersey Battered Women's Service and the Morris County

Sexual Assault Center. Responsiveness reviews will be conducted at the disability organizations including: The Arc of Atlantic County, the Mental Health Association in Atlantic County and the Mental Health Association of Morris County. All of the data from reviews will be gathered and compiled by members of the statewide review teams. The team expects to have all reviews conducted by June 2010 to provide ample time to create and implement barrier response plans based on the findings.

Activity 3: Develop a barrier response plan.

The review teams will provide the pilot partners with some immediate solutions to the gaps observed during the conduction of reviews. For example, providing better physical accessibility may be solved by moving a plant or piece of furniture that is blocking a pathway. Another example is that the issue of safety may be improved for people with mental illness by adding extra lighting, eliminating dark corners. Although there will be instances where a 'quick fix' may be possible, it is expected that there will be a number of issues that arise that are unable to be immediately solved. To address these issues, a barrier response plan will be developed. The plan will include both immediate and long term goals and action steps for responding to safety and access barriers at the local level. Immediate goals would include activities such as purchasing white noise machines for areas where privacy and safety was found to be an issue or the re-arrangement of furniture to create a more welcoming space. Long term goals would include items such as capital improvements or renovations.

Activity 4: Implement immediate activities of the barrier response plan.

Although the barrier response plan will include both long-term and immediate goals, implementation of immediate goals is the only activity to occur during this grant cycle. The long term goals of the barrier response plan will be built into the pilot sites' sustainability plan. The immediate action steps as outlined in the barrier response plan will be taken by the pilot partners with support from the statewide team. Concurrently, an evaluation process will be developed to measure the effectiveness of the changes. The changes should reflect an improvement in safe, accessible services for survivors with disabilities. Based on timing of Activities 1-3 above, the statewide collaboration expects implementation of the barrier response plan to occur in September 2010.



Initiative 3: Develop policies and procedures that are accessible and responsive to survivors with disabilities.

The *NWDNJ* needs assessment informed the collaboration about a number of issues regarding policies and procedures around supporting survivors with disabilities at the pilot sites. Inconsistencies around intake, policy communication, referrals, confidentiality and consumer/survivor rights were evident in information gathered from multiple audiences. *No Wrong Door NJ* places a good deal of importance on the foundational initiatives

discussed above yet recognizes that collaboration building and enhancing safety and access can also act as a building block for the pilot sites to address their policies and procedures. An agency can be strong in its philosophical commitment to survivors with disabilities but if it lacks adequate policies and procedures, the staff may be unaware of how to carry out that commitment. The statewide collaborative has developed a number of activities around enhancing the accessibility and responsiveness of pilot partners' policies and procedures.

Activity 1: Identify policies and procedures to be addressed.

Based on the needs assessment findings, the pilot partners will engage in discussions around policy and procedure areas that need to be addressed. Based on the individual needs of the counties, the local collaborations will decide upon one policy or procedure to revise or create.

Activity 2: Review and Evaluate.

After the pilot partners have made a decision regarding which policy will be revised, the statewide team will collect best practice policies and procedures. These best practices will act as models to enhancing services to survivors with disabilities. The pilot partners will then evaluate their own policies and procedures against the national best practices. The evaluation and subsequent revision process will be performed by the local collaborative as a whole. Revisions to policies and procedures will be documented in a formal memo and submitted to management of the pilot partners to gain consent.

Activity 3: Implement recommended revisions to policies and procedures.

Upon approval to move forward with the recommended changes, the pilot site partners will formalize a written draft of the new or revised policy. This draft will be submitted to the leadership of the pilot sites for approval. Further revisions to the policy will occur as necessary until the policy receives final approval via the process that each pilot partner must follow according to their in-house protocol. With technical assistance from the statewide team, the local collaborations will develop a roll out plan for the revised policy. The plan will include a process for training new and current staff on the policy. Upon completion of the roll out, a plan will be developed to measure the effectiveness of the policy to support survivors with disabilities. In the case that unforeseen challenges prevent the planned policy revisions from being implemented by September 30, 2010, the steps to complete implementation will be built into the pilot sites' sustainability plan. Presentations regarding wording for the policy revision will be made to the leadership of the pilot partners in the expectation that they will continue with the implementation after the grant cycle ends.

V. Long Term Initiatives and Future Plans

The *No Wrong Door New Jersey* collaborative partners began their work together many years ago and acknowledge that there is still much work to be done. We are committed to improving services for people with disabilities who are survivors of violence in New Jersey. By starting a statewide systemic change with two pilot sites, our long-term goal is to eventually share information with the entire state concerning issues related to violence and disability. The collaboration has identified two long-term initiatives to address this goal:

- Increase the awareness of the community and individuals and survivors with disabilities about the issues of violence and abuse, as well as the resources available.
 - Activities: Identify and pursue funding to conduct an awareness campaign. Make materials available in alternate formats. Use suggestions from the needs assessment participants on best ways to reach people with disabilities.
- Share our lessons learned and experiences with disability agencies and victim service agencies statewide.
 - Activities: Create a project website that would include lessons learned by the collaborative, information learned from the needs assessment and links to services for survivors with disabilities; and resources for survivors with disabilities.
 - Expand *NWDNJ's* technical assistance on the issue of violence in the lives of women with disabilities to other counties in New Jersey.

The *No Wrong Door NJ* team plans to have subsequent discussions to develop action plans for these initiatives as well as develop additional ones. The ultimate goal is to have the vision of “*a seamless, integrated system of services for survivors with disabilities*” to become a reality through greater systems change in New Jersey.

VI. Conclusion

The *No Wrong Door New Jersey* project is cognizant of the vast amount of work to be done during implementation phase. The initiatives discussed earlier in this document were chosen because they lay the foundation to move us toward our vision of a world where **“survivors of domestic and sexual violence with disabilities will be treated with dignity and respect through a seamless integrated system where they will receive timely, appropriate and sufficient services regardless of the door they enter”**. In collaboration with the chosen pilot sites, we feel that the activities in the strategic plan will create a systems change at the local level. These sustained changes will act as a springboard for future work as additional ways are explored to enhance services to women with intellectual and developmental disabilities and women with mental illness who are survivors of violence and abuse.

“A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.” - Lao-tzu